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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000099

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR
ABRAMS/PASCUAL/RAMCHAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/2034

TAGS: KWBG PTER ASEC PGOV IS

SUBJECT: PA KEEPS A LID ON WEST BANK DEMONSTRATIONS, NO
FATALITIES

REF: A. JERUSALEM 37
 1B. JERUSALEM 46
 1C. JERUSALEM 48
 1D. JERUSALEM 76

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons
1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (S) SUMMARY. Demonstrations took place across the West Bank on January 9, with 43 reported injuries. Hamas condemned PA public order efforts and called for more protests. PM Salam Fayyad told the Consul General on January 9 that PASF has standing orders to prevent violence and confrontations with the IDF, and to avoid casualties. He acknowledged that PASF efforts were at times "a bit heavy-handed." END SUMMARY

MODERATE SIZED DEMONSTRATIONS, LIMITED CASUALTIES

12. (SBU) Several thousand people demonstrated throughout the West Bank on January 9, resulting in 19 arrests by PASF and 43 injuries (including two journalists). The main security incidents were in:

Involving Israeli Defense Forces (IDF):

-- Qalqiliya: a Ma'an News Agency photographer sustained a bullet injury to his leg during skirmishes with IDF.

-- Jayyus village (Area B) near Qalqilya: contacts report the IDF shot one Palestinian with a live round and four Palestinians with rubber-coated bullets.

-- Bil'in (Area B) and Nihil (Area B/C), west of Ramallah: PA officials reported that four Palestinians were hit with rubber-coated bullets in clashes with IDF, including an al-Jazeera TV cameraman.

-- Al-Ma'asara village (Area B/C) south of Bethlehem: one Palestinian was injured with a rubber-coated bullet.

-- Qalandia (Area B/C): two Palestinians were injured with rubber bullets when the IDF clashed with demonstrators at Qalandiya checkpoint, using tear gas.

-- Hebron: Skirmishes were reported in H2, resulting in 23 injuries from tear gas inhalation and two from rubber-coated bullets.

-- Al-Fawwar Camp (Area B) SW of Hebron city: five Palestinians were treated for tear gas inhalation.

(NOTE: Most of these incidents with the IDF took place where the PASF has little or no security presence)

Involving PA Security Forces (PASF):

-- Tulkarm: PASF arrested seven Hamas members inside Al-Jadid mosque following prayers.

-- Ramallah: A few thousand demonstrators (including hundreds of Hamas activists and many women) marched to al-Manara Square. The activists hoisted Hamas flags with anti-PA chants; civil police dispersed them with tear gas. Civil police and PSO arrested 12 demonstrators. A counter-demonstration arrived in the same square from the Muqata'a, where the President's Office had called for a public gathering. 900-1,000 attendees in the counter-demonstration included senior PA officials and security personnel in civilian clothes who were instructed by the President's Office to take part. By the end of the demonstrations, national unity slogans overcame the anti-PA chants, according to local contacts.

Involving settlers:

-- Qaryut village (Area B/C) south of Nablus: settlers shot and injured one Palestinian in a clash after Friday prayers, according to Palestinian media.

¶13. (SBU) In Jerusalem, dozens clashed with IDF personnel in Ras al-Amud and Wadi al-Joz following Friday prayers; Israeli border police forces used tear gas and water to disperse

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them. Thirty women and children marched from the al-Aqsa Mosque to Damascus Gate without incident.

HAMAS INCITEMENT

¶14. (U) Hamas issued a five-point statement on January 9: 1) criticizing the actions of President Abbas' security forces; 2) demanding release of all "political" detainees held by the PA; 3) exhorting Palestinians to "hold angry demonstrations" in solidarity with Gaza; 4) calling upon university students to lead such demonstrations; and 5) urging that every Friday be a "day of rage" at al-Aqsa Mosque and across the West Bank.

PM FAYYAD ASSESSMENT

¶15. (S) PM Fayyad told the Consul General on January 9 that he moved 500 security officers from Jericho to Ramallah to reinforce existing troops. The Ramallah demonstrations had presented a crowd control problem, he said, and PASF were "a bit heavy-handed" in their response. Fayyad noted that both Hamas and the PFLP were causing problems, the latter especially in Bethlehem. He said PASF have the same orders as before: to hold the line, prevent violence, and prevent confrontations with IDF soldiers--with the added instruction to avoid casualties if possible. He stated that the UNSCR on Gaza might provide an opportunity for the PA to take stronger action against Hamas in the West Bank, as Hamas is opposing a measure adopted by the Security Council and supported by Arab states.

WALLES